



## ASSUMPTION VICARIATE

### LIFE OF THE PROVINCE

#### *General Information*

Assumption Vicariate was erected in September of 1956, as an outgrowth from St. Mary's Province, Regina. The personnel is made up of Fathers of Polish origin or descent whose primary aim is to minister to Polish immigrants. As early as 1898, when the influx of immigrants from Poland to the Canadian West began, the first Oblate followed his compatriots, providing for their spiritual needs. The Polish Oblates have ever since, in ever increasing numbers, been carrying on this apostolate.

It was for this reason, after World War II, when thousands of Poles, displaced by war, found new homes in the towns and cities of friendly Canada, that the Vicariate was born in order to better facilitate the work among the ever increasing numbers of New Canadians of Polish origin. Due to the shortage of Diocesan clergy, the Oblates have played a major part in ministering to their confreres, as they struggled to settle and adjust to the new environment. A number of Oblates from Europe, unable to return to their homeland, due to the political situations, followed their confreres to Canada, thus augmenting the Oblate ranks. Today the Polish Oblates in Canada, numbering some fifty-seven priest, constitute about forty-four per cent of all the Polish clergy in the entire country.

Canadians of Polish origin, number over 325,000. However, these numbers are slowly but steadily increasing by a

continuous influx of immigrants from Poland. To carry on an effective and all-encompassing apostolate among these people, the use of both English and Polish is indispensable. The need of this type of pastoral care will be required for at least another generation or two. Therefore, judging from the present premises, there is little doubt that the specific *raison d'être* of the Vicariate will be fully justified for another forty to fifty years.

*The Specific End of the Congregation* — the lot of the poor and most abandoned.

There were three waves of migration of the Polish people to Canada. At the beginning of the century until World War I; after World War I until the 1930's; and the Post-World War II; among whom the Oblates ministered. Knowing the conditions of each of these waves of immigrants, their destitution and frustration, surveying the work of the Oblates among them, there cannot be a shadow of doubt that the Oblate Motto, «to preach the gospel to the poor», was fully lived out. Each wave of immigrants came with little more than the clothes on their back of material goods. Each waves landed in the country with different background and intellectual equipment. The first were mostly farmers with only elementary formal education. The second wave were workers in search of labour in larger industrial centres. The last wave varied greatly, as many were equipped with professional education and various trades, as well as the average labourer. Thus each group found different conditions in which they had to make their new start to work out an existence. During all these periods, the parishes became not only the spiritual centre, but the centre of information, job placements, official interpreter, as well as a social refuge. The work in these periods of adjustment, even since World War II, the Parish had to care for the entire man, his spiritual, social leisure and work, as well as home life.

The majority of the people under our charge are of the working class, economically belonging to the more or less middle class. Once the immigrants had found their reorien-

tation, they succeeded materially and have built a solid economic foundation.

Today, a majority of the immigrants are economically independent, that is, their earnings are sufficient for the average standard of life that is to be found among this class of people. The Vicariate has always had in mind also the spiritually poor. There are many small settlements of Poles throughout this vast land of our, who have little opportunity to hear the word of God in their native tongue. It is to these groups that the Oblates have travelled about and visited two or three times a year and continue to do so to the present day.

It has also been the policy of the Vicariate to always give preference for clerical help to Diocesan clergy or others who are in charge of small mission posts, by way of preaching Forty Hours, Missions and replacements. I think this work has been much appreciated by other clergy.

It would seem to me that the Oblate motto of preaching the gospel to the poor is being carried out in our Vicariate, exemplified in the work that the Fathers carry on and the homes that they live in.

## THE WORK OF EVANGELIZATION

### *Preaching the Word of God*

In accordance with the aims of the Congregation, the preaching of the Word of God by way of Missions, Tridiums, Novennas, Forty Hour Devotions, Parish Retreats, etc., has always played an important role in the Vicariate. Two Fathers at least, have been assigned to this ministry, while others participated on part-time basis.

During the past six years, about ninety weeks of Parish Missions were conducted. It has been the experience of the Fathers engaged in this work that the old format of Missions is no longer applicable and does not reach the most abandoned souls. Study in this regard has been made to an extent and the experience of other Missionaries has been noted and their results studied. A new approach is

definitely required, particularly in the preparation of the Mission on the parish basis. Method in what this preparation would consist must be presented to the Pastors and his co-operation is indispensable for the true success of the spiritual renewal. Likewise, the presentation of the mission material must be revamped. Efforts in this area have been made and further study must continue.

Besides Parish Missions, there were at least eighteen weeks of Parish Retreats, seventeen Novennas and over sixty Forty Hour Devotions. Some thirty-five parishes were given Holy Week and Christmas help, plus fifty months of replacement of Pastors and Assistants.

The majority of the faithful preached to in almost all these spiritual exercises were those of the poorer and middle class population.

There are many pockets of small settlements of the Polish people where there is no Polish Parish in the vicinity. It has been the assumed duty of our Fathers to visit such areas at least two to four times a year. There are some ten such areas where our Fathers make regular visits, enabling the people to hear the Word of God in their own language and afford an opportunity for the Sacrament of Penance. Generally such visits last about two and a half days, beginning Friday evening with Mass and Sermon, then Saturday afternoon Confessions, evening Mass and Homily, and again Sunday morning, Confession, Mass and Homily. This service is greatly appreciated by the various Pastors. House visits are made at least once a year, or more often, to all living in the vicinity. These visits have been a great source of consolation to many groups.

#### *Visitation of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Czestochowa*

In the year 1966, the Polish nation will be commemorating the One Thousandth Anniversary of Christianity. Poles all over the world are making preparations to join their confreres to fittingly observe such a rare religious and national event in their long history. In Canada, the Polish clergy, in which the Oblates played a major role, this spiritual preparation is taking place in the form of the Visita-

tion of an Icon of the Blessed Mother of Czestochowa. It was brought from Czestochowa, taken to Rome and blessed by the Holy Father, Paul VI, in 1964, and received in Canada. The intention is to visit all the Polish centres as well as others across this vast land of ours. This visitation began at the oldest parish in Canada, Wilno, Ontario, where one of our Fathers conducted the Triduum. Although each Pastor of a given parish has been free to choose his own preacher, the Oblates have been called to do so in a majority of the places. In fact, for at least four months of 1965, one of the Fathers from the Mission band is to accompany the visitation of the Icon throughout the entire Western Canada. The Fathers have been most happy to carry on this work, preaching the way to Jesus through Mary, the beloved mother of the Polish nation. This occasion is being utilized to awaken the Catholics to their great responsibility to intercede at the throne of the Heavenly Father for religious and national freedom of the Church behind the iron curtain. The moral and spiritual renewal so necessary in this age, is truly taking place wherever the Icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa appears. No Mission according to the testimony of the Parish Priests has done more in this regard. The Oblates are proud and honoured to carry on this apostolate devotion to Mary.

In preaching the Word of God, mention may be made here that the Fathers paid particular attention to the needs of various secular priests; ministering to small groups on the Western plains, always giving them preference to large centres where others gladly go. Through this task it appears that on the whole the Oblates have gained the respect and deep admiration of all the Diocesan Clergy as well as other religious groups. Being the largest in the country, we feel that we have done a good job, although perhaps not the best.

### *Closed Retreat Houses*

After two years of preliminary studies of Closed Retreat Houses, the Vicariate took the first concrete step towards establishing one of their own in October of 1961, by purchasing a twelve acre site on the beautiful banks of

the Port Credit River, in the Township of Toronto, Archdiocese of Toronto. A detailed study of various Retreat Houses in Canada and the United States followed by the Provincial Administration. In spite of the small number of Fathers with a limited income, the project was pushed forward with trust in Divine Providence and our Immaculate Mother.

During the latter part on June, 1962, the actual construction got underway. It may be of interest to note that the entire project was undertaken without the assistance of an architect, but rather a construction firm contributed its know-how and an artist friend of the Oblates gave the artistic touch, under the supervision of the Provincial Administration. The finished product turned out to be functional in every detail and at the same time simple and beautiful in the entire concept and design. The Chapel, the focal point of the entire building, is rather unique in its concept, perhaps the only one of its kind in the Congregation. It features the figure of the Resurrected Christ at the back of the altar, ascending into Heaven on clouds. The altar is away from the wall, enabling the Sacrifice to be offered facing the faithful. The nave of the Chapel is oval in shape, creating the feeling that all surround the table of Sacrifice and are close to it. No Communion Rail to separate the faithful from the priest. The simplicity, beauty and originality has aroused the curiosity of thousands who have come to see it. The most common remark made by the viewers is, « This chapel gives you hope ». The local daily papers have given it a tremendous amount of publicity during the past two years. It has a seating capacity of eighty or more, if necessary.

The retreatants' quarters number sixty-three private rooms, each with bathroom facilities and each electrically heated with individual thermostatic controls. The rooms are so arranged, with soundproof folding doors, that they can be adjusted perfectly for married couples retreats, who wish to share the same quarters. The total area is about 27,000 sq. ft., with an air conditioned chapel, dining room and lecture hall. Due to the manner in which the entire construction was carried out, the cost was very reasonable, amount-

ing to about \$ 410,000.00 including the site, site work, parking grounds and air conditioning. The furnishing amounted to some \$ 85,000.000 plus land with a house, having an area of over 3,000 sq. ft., amounted to \$ 70,000.00. The house is the residence of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Lay Institute who assist in the retreat house operation.

The first retreat was held on May 17, 1963; thus to May 17, 1965, there were exactly one hundred retreats with a total attendance of 4,993 and of these, there were thirty-six series of Married Couples' Retreats with a total of nine hundred and eight couples. It is the particular aim of our Retreat House to cater to married couples as our House is the only one in the area that can provide adequate accommodation for this type of retreats.

There are three Fathers engaged full time in this work and one coadjutor Brother.

The vast majority of retreatants are of the middle class with about five per cent thus far from the profession group of doctors and lawyers. About ninety-seven per cent come from the urban areas.

Besides the regular retreats, there have been a number of Evenings of Recollection and Day of Recollection for both the laity and the diocesan and religious clergy. The House has also been used for other purposes such as Seminars for Catechetics, Religious Superiors Meetings and Study Days for specialized Catholic Action Groups. Retreats for men and women, married or single, as well as special retreats once a year for the handicapped. Also, there is an annual retreat for select high school boys who are thinking of the priesthood.

It may be of interest to note that although the vast majority of the retreats are held in the English language, however, due to the tremendous influx of new Canadians from various parts of Europe, we had groups of French, German, Polish, Ukranian and Slovenian, where the retreat was conducted in their mother tongue. These groups are now a regular feature of the House.

All retreats begin in the evening and last for two days. Nine conferences are given plus two morning meditations.

Silence is observed from the opening to the closing, including mealtimes, during which specially selected tapes and records are played dealing with various topics. Most of the topics selected are related to the retreat conferences. There is no recreation but instead a guided discussion is held, relevant to their state of life. Conferences are geared to the practical Christian living in today's environment. This type of retreat appears to be answering the need. However, a constant watch is being kept on any new trends which may be more effective. The Fathers participate in the various retreat seminars or conventions in order to keep abreast with the times. No doubt some modification may be necessary as to some groups, especially to those who have been coming to retreats for a number of years.

During every retreat one conference deals with the vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We certainly have high hopes that this ministry will bring vocations, but in our short experience it is still too soon to make any appraisal in this regard.

### *Foreign Missions*

The Vicariate during its short life has not as yet accepted any foreign missions, although this question is already under consideration. However, the Vicariate has not been unmindful of the needs of others. The former Polish District of France, now the Vicariate of Our Lady of Czystochowa, has sent us some personnel and we in turn have substantially aided the District materially. Father V. Mendrella spent almost two years among us preaching missions and retreats, with all his earnings being assigned to the Vicariate. This material aid is continued and there is close co-operation between the Polish Vicariate in France and the Assumption Vicariate.

The matter of assisting foreign missions is under close study by the vicarial administration. What form this assistance will take, time will tell.

### *Sanctification of Clergy, Religious Men & Women*

The Queen of Apostles Retreat House is open for clergy Days of Recollection for both the secular and religious. In



the short time that we have opened the retreat house, there are several groups of secular clergy who come regularly for Days of Recollection, besides a large number of priests who come individually for Days of Recollection or several days of private retreats.

Already other religious and secular clergy groups have used our facilities for their annual retreat.

Lutheran Ministers from the area have led a retreat of their own.

Study Days for Lay Apostolate have been conducted — the Young Christian Workers group.

A Study Week for teachers in catechetics, under the auspices of the Canadian Catholic Conference were held.

Study Days for religious Superiors of Women are conducted in our facilities.

The Provincial has attended all National Religious Conferences for Major Superiors, and there has been close co-operation between the Vicariate and the main offices of the Conference.

Two Fathers at least, have been giving regular conferences to the religious communities of women.

In one Community, weekly conferences were given to Postulants, Novices and First Year Professed; and in three other communities, bi-monthly conferences to the Professed. Several of the Fathers are either Ordinary or Extraordinary confessors for a number of communities of women.

### *Parishes*

The Province is entrusted with the care of twenty-five parishes to which are attached twenty-two mission churches in country areas.

### *Cities:*

1) Holy Ghost - Winnipeg, Man. .... about 1,500 families; oldest Oblate parish and mother of the churches in Western Canada.

2) St. Stanislaus - Toronto, Ont. .... about 1,800 families. First parish in the East.

3) St. Mary's - Toronto, Ont. .... about 400 families.

- 4) St. Casimir's - Toronto, Ont. .... about 2,200 families.
- 5) Holy Angels - Toronto, Ont. .... territorial parish,  
about 600 families.
- 6) St. Hedwig's - Oshawa, Ont. .... about 600 families.
- 7) Our Lady of Perpetual Help - St. Catherines, Ont. ....  
about 650 families.
- 8) St. Peter & Paul - Welland, Ont. .... territorial and  
language parish, about 450 families.
- 9) St. Hyacinth's - Ottawa, Ont. .... about 350 families.
- 10) Holy Rosary - Edmonton, Alta. .... about 600 families.
- 11) St. Casimir's - Vancouver, B.C. .... about 250 families.
- 12) St. Henry's - Melville, Sask. .... about 400 families,  
territorial parish. Lemling Mission, about 55 families.
- 13) St. Joseph's - Kirkland Lake, Ont. .... about 75  
families. Mission Post attached at Noranda .... about 60  
families.

### *Country Parishes*

- 14) St. Ann's - Fenwick, Ont. .... about 100 families.
- 15) East Selkirk, Man. .... about 100 families, with  
Naroal, Man. as Mission Church with some 75 families.
- 16) Garson, Man. .... about 75 families with Mission  
Post of Tyndal, Man. .... about 50 families; and Walkburg  
.... about 15 families.
- 17) Tolstoi, Man. .... about 50 families, with Mission  
Post attached. Vita, Man. .... about 25 families and Kroze,  
Minn., U.S.A. .... about 60 families.
- 18) Elphinstone, Man. .... about 100 families with  
Mission Posts attached. Erickson — about 40 families;  
and Rackham .... about 75 families.
- 19) Rossburn, Man. .... about 70 families with Mission  
Posts attached. Oakburn .... about 40 families and Shoal  
Lake .... about 60 families.
- 20) Rama, Sask. .... about 75 families, with Dobrowody  
.... about 60 families; and Invermany Mission .... about 15  
families.

21) Buchanan, Sask. .... about 40 families, with Tiny, Sask. Mission Post .... about 45 families.

22) Kuroki, Sask. .... about 60 families, with Wadena .... about 25 families and Quill Lake Mission Post .... about 35 families.

23) Fosston, Sask. .... about 75 families, with Rose Valley Mission .... about 60 families, and Archvill Mission .... about 35 families.

24) Lintlaw, Sask. .... about 60 families, with Kelvington Mission Post .... about 75 families.

25) Sturgis, Sask. .... about 60 families, with Steenen Mission Post .... about 20 families; Norquay .... about 35 families and Rocford .... about 15 families.

As will be noted from the statistics given above, the main preoccupation of the Fathers is the Vicariate is parochial ministry.

It is most difficult to assess the influence that the parishes have had on the life of the parishioners, especially in the large urban areas where the bulk of our parishes are located. However, I do not think that it would be any boast or exaggeration to state that the parishes in the urban areas especially, have been the Mecca of thousands of its members; the source of not only the spiritual strength but a centre where all their human needs could be presented. A little amplification on this point.

### *Spiritual Ministry*

A Majority of the parishes were established as language parishes, particularly in the urban centres. Those in the country areas are territorial but areas where the Polish community predominated. Today the ministry is carried on in both Polish and English in all parishes. The proportion that is given to each language depends of the circumstances, i.e., the composition of the parish. The word of God is preached in both languages and now the use of the vernacular in the Liturgy follows the same pattern. English is particularly necessary for those already born or reared on Canadian soil, although many continue to preserve their

languages but generally are not fluent enough to understand the liturgical services as all their education is conducted in English. In all the parishes the prescribed organizations with a spiritual aim are to be found, i.e., Holy Name Society, Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, Catholic Women's League, St. Vincent de Paul, Young People's Clubs, both junior and senior groups.

It is acknowledged that the most necessary and most effective pastoral ministry consists in the house-to-house visitation of the families. This work has been carried out, however, perhaps not as well as it should have and perhaps could have been in some areas. The results of pastoral visits are beyond measure.

Providing courses in the preparation for marriage is also made available in some areas. Religious instructions to children who do not attend Catholic schools for one reason or another, is everywhere made available throughout the year as well as a couple of weeks summer course.

Efforts toward the liturgical renewal are being applied in accordance with the instructions of the Ordinary. There are problems in this area due to lack of liturgical books in the Polish language, however, the Fathers have printed their own Mass cards which are used for the entire Polish community in Canada.

### *Social*

Because of the language problem for many new arrivals, and lack of familiarity with Canadian conditions, the parish office has been and still is the source of much information regarding social needs. Counsel is sought regarding social welfare, old age pensions, family allowances, job placements, citizenship requirements, recommendations, immigration problems, medical aid and family problems, etc. Almost every human need is brought to the parish office. This work is often exacting and demanding. A great deal of time must be dedicated to answer the needs. However, this is much appreciated and shows that the Church is interested not only in the spiritual needs of man but his temporal needs as well.

## *Economic Aid*

To show more concretely that the Church is interested in the whole Man, a number of our parishes have initiated Credit Unions to come with financial aid to those in need, especially in setting down their first steps on Canadian soil. Some of the Credit Unions under the auspices of the parish have achieved a record justly to be proud of. Here are a few statistics re St. Stanislaus Parish Credit Union Ltd., (with a branch office at St. Casimir's Parish and rendering help when necessary to St. Mary's Parish-ioners). In the course of 20 years, ending 1964 — Loans made — 5,888 to the tune of \$ 14,287,358.91. During the year 1964, there were 882 loans amounting to the sum of \$ 3,522,107.00. Membership — end of 1964, 5,680 with a capital of \$ 6,384,322.00. I believe it is the largest parish Credit Union in the entire country. The fact that this Credit Union was under the auspices of the Church inspired confidence and insured continuous growth.

## *Recreation*

Most of the parishes in the large urban centres have recreational facilities for their members. Social recreational functions sponsored by parish auspices are very well attended. They have been a source of revenue for the parish and a place to meet for the members. For many this was about the only social recreational function that they attended.

## *National Interests*

Noting well that the Catholic faith has been so closely interwoven with the national culture and customs, the parish has afforded the opportunity for the members to preserve their national customs in their adopted fatherland. During the week, after the regular school hours, all city parishes provide facilities for the study of the Polish language. In many places this is done twice a week for various classes, or Saturday mornings. These children are taught by Sisters or lay teachers. The popularity of these classes can be noted by the statistics alone. In Toronto, St. Casimir's, 400 children attend, St. Stanislaus, 300 and in other centres, proportionately. There are also taught

national folk dances and singing. Dance groups and choirs have on occasion reached a high degree of perfection, winning wide recognition.

### *Schools*

Due to the variety of Provincial school laws, the circumstances in this area vary. In the strict sense of the word, there are only two parochial schools attached to our parishes. Holy Ghost — Winnipeg and St. Casimir's — Vancouver. Here the parish is completely responsible for the school. Whereas in other Provinces, the State supports Catholic schools in the elementary grades, and in Saskatchewan and Alberta, in the high school field as well. There are several places where the school is located next to our parish as in Oshawa, Welland, Fenwick and Melville, but the support and management is under a Separate School Board. Having a school next to the parish grounds is a considerable aid in the growth and expansion of the parish.

### *Sisters*

In Eastern Canada, the Felician Sisters are associated in most parishes, working with the Fathers; conducting Polish classes, catechism and social work. In the West, we have the faithful Benedictine Sisters and the Sisters of the Resurrection in Vancouver. All the parishes owe a tremendous debt of gratitude for the help and the indispensable assistance that the Sisters have continued to render in our parish works. Without them, much would have been left undone.

### *Diocesan Projects*

It can be stated without any hesitation, that the Oblate parishes have always carried their fair share in all Diocesan projects. The ready and willing co-operation has been the aim in co-operating with the Local Ordinary.

### *Parishes & Vicariate*

As parish work constitutes the main preoccupation of the vast majority of the Fathers, it is natural that the interest of the young Fathers is inclined in that direction. Time may be approaching, if it is not already here, whether

we should accept further parishes or begin to set our sights on works in other fields. In some areas, especially the country, the Polish language is becoming less and less important. Should our Fathers think of areas where their language is still required, or should they begin to think of mission work in the underdeveloped countries? This question is under examination.

The parishes have been a source of some vocations, unfortunately not in as large numbers as we would like. It seems to be true that a first generation immigrant does not seem to give too many vocations. Later on the conditions appear to change. However, we are encountering the same difficulties as do other Communities. During the past six years, we have only about five vocations to the Oblates and the prospects for the future are very dim. There was one to the Diocesan clergy and one to another Community.

In general, the Fathers accept the necessity of working in the parishes in the circumstances that are found in this country. If they did not do this work, much of it would be totally neglected for lack of clergy.

### *Chaplaincy*

One Father is at present engaged as full time Chaplain of a Religious Community. He gives regular conferences to the novices, postulants and newly professed.

### *Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate*

The Missionary Association of Mary Immaculate has not been developed to its full potentiality. More effort should be directed into this area. However, there are a number of very devoted lay people who closely watch the work of our Congregation. They support is materially and by their prayers and sacrifices. The total active membership however is only in the vicinity of 750.

## II

### LIFE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCE

#### Esteem of Religious Community Life:

##### *Charity*

In general, the problems that arise from Community Religious Life are understood and faced with realism. The difficulties are recognized for what they are, part of daily living, and when they cannot be ameliorated, then they are accepted with resignation. It is but natural that some find this community life more difficult than others. This may be partly explained by the fact that a great number of the Fathers have been compelled to live alone and after some years to bring them back into community. For some, this is a difficult adjustment, for others almost an impossible one.

A constant probing into the meaning of religious life, of the role that it is called to play in the Church, is absolutely necessary in order that the members may live it in ever increasing fullness. The spirit of profound faith ought to permeate the members, and this aspect ought to be strongly emphasized in the formative years of the candidates. Without doubt, in spite of the difficulties that are bound to arise, charity has been the unifying bond of the members and practiced by many in almost heroic degrees.

##### *Community Prayers*

Without doubt, a new Vade Mecum for the Oblates ought to be prepared in keeping with the general updating of the Church. A greater flexibility in adapting the various prayers to conform to the nature of the apostolate that the members are engaged in in various parts of the world.

Due to the nature of our apostolate and the fewness of the Fathers in our Houses and Residences, (largest House 4 members, and many Fathers still live alone) it is difficult to carry out all the Community Exercises. Many are performed in private. A majority of the House and Residences



endeavour to have Morning Prayers in common, either the Oblate Prayers of Canonical Hour of Lauds, particular Examen and Evening Adoration joined with the Night Prayers or Complines.

Mass is celebrated daily by all the Fathers, as they are scheduled Masses for various apostolates. Concelebration has been practiced only during the Annual Retreat, for those who so desire, others celebrate private Mass. Reading during the entire meals is not practiced in the Houses except in the House of Formation. However, reading before and after meals is observed in larger Houses or Residences.

Monthly Retreats are held at regular intervals, during which time there is always an opportunity for discussion of pastoral or religious problems. The Annual Retreat is likewise faithfully made, although for some of the Fathers it is impossible to make a full six days because they must return to their parishes by Saturday morning. The parishes being bi-lingual, it is impossible to obtain replacements.

In most of the Houses regular gatherings of the Fathers engaged in the Pastoral work are held; in some more often than others. During these conferences the problems of the apostolate are discussed. «Coulpe» conferences are not practiced in the Vicariate.

In all our parishes and Houses, cult of the Sacred Heart is promoted by way of First Friday Devotions and during the month of June. These spiritual exercises play a prominent part in the spiritual life of the parish. Forty Hours Devotions are held in all parishes to foster greater love for the Holy Eucharist. Frequent and even daily Holy Communion among the faithful has been encouraged at all opportune moments and the results have been most gratifying.

Marian devotions play a very important role in the life of our members and the faithful under their care. During the months of May and October, rosary devotions are held in many parishes daily and others several times a week. In the cities especially, these devotions are well attended. Prior to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, many of the parishes hold a novena, with special preachers to foster

an even deeper love to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The whole spiritual life of the Polish people is intimately bound up with the numerous devotions and shrines in honour of the Mother of God. These spiritual exercises are being kept up.

### *Attachment to the Congregation*

Generally speaking, the members of the Vicariate have a deep love for the Congregation and are vitally interested in all its undertakings. They are proud of what the Oblates have done and are doing in almost all corners of the world, in the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. They strongly believe that there are many Oblate « saints » in heaven and pray and long for the day when the Church will publicly acknowledge this.

With the interest of the Congregation at heart, there are questions asked and a self-examination being made, whether or not in view of all the different works that the Oblates have undertaken, some adaptations should not be made? Perhaps some areas of our apostolate in some countries no longer conform to the aim of our Congregation? Other areas which we have accepted desperately need more personnel, thus should we not relinquish some posts? These are some of the thoughts that pass through the minds of our members.

### *Recruitment*

Unfortunately, recruitment has not been very successful since the last Chapter. In fact, we have regressed. The drop-outs from Novitiate and Scholasticate have been high and most discouraging. The Fathers are aware of our predicament as to the future. It must be noted that during the past two or three years, the interest in recruitment among the Fathers has greatly increased and manifested in concrete action. The Vocational Director has finally laid down a definite plan and the number of boys in the Juniorate is increasing. Workshops are held in the House of Studies in the East, and those in the West attend St. Thomas College. This is the main concern of the Administration and still greater efforts must be expanded in this regard.

An explanation for the slow recruitment in our particular case, is the fact that we look for boys of Polish origin or descent. It seems true to say that the first group of immigrants seldom provide many vocations. Due to the circumstances under which they live and the difficulties that they find in adjusting themselves to a new environment, vocations to the priesthood or religious life are not numerous, although we have had a couple from this group. Another factor that is discouraging, is lack of Catholic High Schools. In an area with the greatest potential for vocations the vast majority of the boys from our parishes do not attend Catholic High Schools because of the lack of space. Seldom do we get vocations from public high schools. Problems in this area are formidable but somehow must be overcome.

### Evangelical Counsels and Holy Vows:

#### *Poverty*

The spirit of poverty is being steadily cultivated by a majority of the Fathers. This is exemplified in their daily living where many of the Fathers are satisfied with the bare essentials. I think that it is safe to say that the Fathers live in accord with the standards of the average people to whom they minister and many even below. The willingness for self-deprivations is there.

The Houses in the Vicariate are built and furnished only with the standards of the average working man's class. None are luxurious. The cars are of the cheaper standard category nothing luxurious about them.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that in the individual practice of the virtue of poverty, much could be improved. Attachment to hobbies, to sports equipment for personal use and some superfluous personal items could stand examination.

The vow of poverty, by way of obtaining the necessary permission for the spending of sums of money, is generally well observed. Rarely is there abuse in this regard, although

at times there is perhaps too great an inclination of interpreting, as presumed permission.

The problem of poverty is in the realm of institutional poverty and especially in the field of travel and providing various new equipment in furthering the apostolate. These areas require adjustment and revaluation in the light of the society in which we live and the modern technological developments.

In general, I would think that the testimony to poverty in the Vicariate, although not perfect but I think average, is in accord with the standards of living in our country and among our people.

### *Obedience*

The vow of obedience is a constant subject of study and a desire for deeper penetration as to its meaning. The vow itself is clearly understood, but the virtue of obedience requires constant reflection. The full realization and implementation into the lives of the individuals, in their everyday action, that deeper understanding that God is the ultimate designer of all things. The main problem for all is to constantly seek ways and means to know the will of God and to be able to recognize same as it comes to him through other human beings. This requires constant untiring efforts. Intellectually, this is admitted and recognized, but the effort to conform actions with this knowledge does present problems.

The spirit of profound faith must be inculcated for this is indispensable in harmonious collaboration between subjects and superiors. In the present world of turmoil and unrest, it has its repercussions on true religious concept of obedience. The spirit of questioning all orders, ideas and the desire for dialogue, between superiors and subjects makes the development or growth in the virtue of obedience at times a bit difficult. However, the problems confronting the entire world and the Church in this field is felt by the Community and adjustment to time and conditions have to be made.

The role of local superiors is clearly outlined in the rule. In formed Houses the duties and responsibilities are clearly stated. The district superior's role is rather a difficult one. Most of the Fathers live alone or in small houses, thus close contact between subjects and superiors is more difficult. They meet about once a month for a Day of Recollection. Generally, the various permissions in a given District are faithfully applied for and new projects have the supervision of the district superiors. The immediate authority of the superiors is not felt by the subjects because of the nature of the work and each subject is left a great deal to his own initiative.

House conferences and district discussions on tasks assigned are frequently given serious consideration and attempt is made to organize same in a manner that would best achieve the goals.

Faithfulness to Community regulations no doubt could be improved. Some regulations are disregarded and a greater adherence would certainly be most desirable. When formal obediences have been given, none were ever turned down, although of some a great sacrifice was demanded. The necessity of changes was well understood, in the light that these changes were being made only for the benefit of the works committed to the Vicariate. Circumstances and conditions dictate some changes and the spirit of submission was always evident even though it often hurt.

In regard to submission to higher authority, the Holy Father and the Ordinary, there is little problem in that regard. None of the Ordinaries have ever complained on this score.

### *Problems - Suggestions*

It would seem to me that the need to prepare men for the office of Superior in some manner would be most desirable. I believe that it is generally recognized that the growth and development of the Community depends so much upon the local superior. He is the true Father and leader and when that is lacking, the Community suffers. A deeper realization on the part of the superiors of their role and of its importance cannot be stressed too much. The problem

of obedience stems both from the subject and frequently in a greater extent from the superior. If one knows how to command, generally orders will be obeyed. More dialogue is without doubt necessary. It would seem that lack of proper communications is the main cause of breakdown in obedience. These lines of communication must be clear and unencumbered at all times. Recognizing this problem is half solving same.

### *Chastity*

In a world saturated with materialism bent on catering to the sensual appetite of man, it is of the greatest importance that the proper ideals of chastity be implanted in candidates for the priesthood and religious life. The sublimation of human love for the love of Christ is a task that cannot be over-emphasized. The gradual growth in this concept must be cultivated and nourished constantly.

Total forgetfulness of self, coupled with the spirit of mortification and readiness to sacrifice for the benefit of human souls, is the foundation upon which the virtue of Chastity must be built and these elements will assure its growth. A deep understanding of the people of God, realization that we are His instruments in bringing these people back to Him, the deeper understanding of Christ's manifested love for every human soul, should inspire greater efforts for the virtue of chastity.

This ideal of chastity is shared by the members of the Vicariate and the effectiveness of their efforts in pastoral work is gaged by this virtue in a great degree.

It would seem to me that in the period of formation, a greater degree of instruction should be given in the development of this virtue. It would seem that the candidates should have a thorough concept of married life with its full implications and its dignity as well as its difficulties. Chastity in preference to married life should be chosen only with that deep conviction of readiness for total dedication for the love of souls, where one can become the instrument to bring these souls closer to God through Christ. The difficulties of celibate life should not be in any way minimized but openly presented to the candidates. The role

of sex in human relations ought to be clearly presented and as far as humanly possible, to present the candidate with the right concept so that he realizes what obligations he is assuming. Contact with the world, with family life, during the period of formation before a final decision is taken, would seem to be most essential and could be a great contributing factor in pushing the candidate to full maturity.

## TRAINING OF FUTURE MISSIONARIES

### IN SEARCH OF VOCATION

#### *Juniorates*

The Juniorate of Assumption Province goes under the title of The Oblate House of Studies, in Toronto, Canada.

1) The type of studies followed here is the modern languages with Latin and the scientific (with the sciences, mathematics and languages).

The length of studies is ordinarily five full years. Our students follow this course at Michael Power High School which is under the direction of the Basilian Fathers (C.S.B.). This applies to our students of the Province of Ontario. In the Western Canadian Provinces, the same type of course is followed at Saint Thomas College, North Battleford, Saskatchewan. The length of these studies is only four years. All the courses are accredited in the respective Provinces.

Since our purpose is to promote Polish vocations to the Oblates, special classes of Polish are taught at the House of Studies three periods each week.

2) Catechetics and Liturgy are taught in all grades according to the latest methods.

3) The way of life in our Institution is a family atmosphere with broad concessions such as television and radio, monthly visits to families, weekly outings to the city, with regular school holidays of Christmas, Easter and the summer holidays which are spent at home.

4) The total number of students is 31. The highest number in one year was 15 (1960 - 1961), and the lowest was 6.

5) Only those interested in our Congregation are accepted. Unfortunately, not a single candidate from this House has persevered beyond novitiate.

6) The students come chiefly from our Oblate parishes. They are recruited through the Oblate Vocation Workshop Week held annually at the House of Studies for boys in Grades six, seven and eight.

7) Three Fathers and no Brothers are attached to the House at present. Two of these Fathers teach regular courses at nearby Michael Power High School (a source of revenue and Oblate propaganda for vocations).

8) There are no lay teachers on the staff at the House of Studies.

9) Under the present circumstances, this would seem to be the best solution. However, the fact of no perseverance of any student for the past six years causes us to reflect very seriously on the situation. A programme aimed at senior high school students is envisioned for the immediate future. More mature students may help to solve the great drop out which we have been suffering.

#### *Novitiate, Scholasticate & Pastoral Year*

The Vicariate does not conduct any of the above mentioned Houses of Formation. The Novices were being sent to the Novitiate at St. Norbert, Manitoba, and the Scholastics to St. Charles Scholasticate, Saskatchewan. As for the Pastoral year, some Fathers attended Sedes Sapientiae in Ottawa, and some of the Scholasticate at Washington and the latest Pastoral Institute John XXIII at St. Paul Minn., of the Central Province, in the U.S.A..

The Pastoral year has no doubt been of some benefit for the young Fathers. However, whether the Pastoral year answers the need intended, is open to question. The attitude and reaction of the young Fathers is one of passive acceptance, to openly critical. Perhaps one of the best reactions was to the summer Pastoral Programme initiated in the



Central Province. The two summer courses are to substitute for the Pastoral year.

The Courses given were as follows:

Pastoral Homiletics	— 10 hours
Dope and Narcotics	— 3 hours
Church History	— 10 hours
Juvenile Courts	— 4 hours
Group Dynamics & Leadership	— 12 hours
Homiletics	— 14 hours
Theology of Art Appreciation	— 12 hours
Counselling the Religious Women	— 5 hours
Premarital Investigation	— 3 hours
Developing our Priestly Spiritual Growth	— 8 hours
Feminine Physiology & Psychology	— 5 hours
Vatican Council	— 3 hours
Unity and Holiness in Marriage	— 4 hours
Speech and Communications	— 5 hours
The Juvenile and his Problems	— 3 hours
White Society	— 1 hour

During this time the Fathers were given opportunity to work weekends in the parish and substitute in the hospitals as well as other ministry.

It would seem however that the Pastoral year ought to be restudied after the past experiences.

### *De Mazenod Retreat*

During the past six years there were six Fathers who made the Thirty Day Retreat. Two attended the Retreat for the English speaking Fathers in Rome, two at Twerksbury, Mass., and two at Austin, Minn.

### *The De Mazenod Retreat — Evaluation*

The thirty day retreat could last about six weeks; a week of preparation and the last few days for a sort of summation. The candidates for these retreats should be voluntary and around ten years of priesthood. The most important it would seem to me, is the Retreat Master and the programme. Unfortunately, Retreat Masters who are not

able to present new ideas or old ideas in new forms, who should be the inspiration of the entire retreat, have a very negative effect on the retreatants.

When the retreat master is carefully chosen with sufficient time to prepare himself, then most of the Fathers are willing to undergo the experience and it helps them considerably in their spiritual orientation.

The Fathers who have participated see its tremendous benefits but a great deal of attention must be paid to the Retreat Master and the programme. In this area improvements are necessary.

FELIX KWIATKOWSKI O.M.I.

*Provincial*

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